

news

Closures result in crowding, says district chair

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The school district would like nothing more than to reopen now-closed schools, school board chair Lyn Hall said Thursday in response to concerns about overcrowding raised during trustees' monthly meeting earlier this week.

"Whether that be in Mackenzie, whether that be the Hart, College Heights area, we'd love to be able to do that," Hall said in an interview Thursday.

During trustees' meeting Tuesday night in Mackenzie, district parent advisory council chairman Don Sabo told trustees Heritage elementary school is at 136 per cent of its working capacity, Glenview elementary is at 122 per cent and College Heights is at 112 per cent.

"A lot of the crowding in the schools is the result of closing seven schools in this district," Sabo said.

However, enrolment is expected to decline by a further 200 students next year, and Hall said that puts the thought of reopening closed schools out of the question for the time being.

"Our projections are status quo, we're not seeing increases," Hall

said. "We're going to lose a tremendous amount of kids out of Heather Park, we're not seeing huge issues as far as enrolment increases at Glenview and then if we move to the western part of the city and up to the College Heights area, it's kind of the same situation."

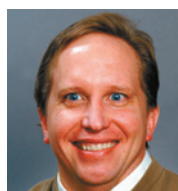
"We've been asked 'why don't you open Gladstone?' Well, at this point, financially it's just not viable."

All that said, school district officials admit they were caught off guard by the revival in Mackenzie, where an additional 30 students have been added to Morfee elementary's enrolment since the beginning of the year.

"Mackenzie is a bit of an anomaly because it is seeing a resurgence," Hall said. "We go with our projections and, if something happens, we've told the community we will act as quickly as possible to facilitate making more room for kids."

"Now that's a decision the board will have to make – what that more room for more kids means. Can we do it at Morfee? Do we have to look at a modular? Do we have to look at [reopening] Mackenzie elementary?"

"That's the decision the board will have to make."



The Prince George Citizen's coffee chat

is next Tuesday. Drop by Books and Company at 10 a.m. to chat with Citizen reporter Mark Nielsen. The coffee is on us!



FORE! — Jim Chandler watches his tee shot at the first hole of Prince George Golf and Curling club. The course opened for the season this week. Citizen photo by Brent Braaten

Reduction, relief on tax table

—from page 1

While new Liberal Premier Christy Clark moved up the date of the vote to June 24 from September, the public has until July 22 to have their ballot into Elections B.C.

Falcon has said everything is up for discussion on the HST, includ-

ing reducing the 12 per cent tax and providing relief on certain items. He said the changes would be known before people began voting.

The B.C. Liberal government has also announced a \$1.7-million information campaign.

The cost of the talking taxes

process – separate from the information campaign – is not known yet.

As part of the information funding, the province is providing \$500,000 to be split between the no and yes sides, which will be administered by independent decision maker Stephen Owen, a

former provincial ombudsman and federal MP from Vancouver.

The NDP's new leader, Adrian Dix, has said he will play a leading role in fighting the HST in the run-up to the vote.

Stikine NDP MLA Doug Donaldson said there is no escaping the fact the HST is a \$1.9-billion tax

transfer from corporations to consumers.

Cariboo North NDP MLA Bob Simpson has called on the B.C. Liberal government to expand its harmonized sales tax debate into a comprehensive assessment of the province's tax and revenue regime.

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